

HOUSE No. 636

By Mrs. Parente of Milford, petition of Marie J. Parente and others relative to notification procedures and penalties by the Department of Social Services involving criminal record screening for foster parents. The Judiciary.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PETITION OF:

Marie J. Parente	Christine E. Canavan
Carol A. Donovan	Stanley C. Rosenberg
Paul J. Donato	Elizabeth A. Poirier

In the Year Two Thousand and Five.

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES' NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES AND PENALTIES RELATING TO CRIMINAL RECORD SCREENING FOR FOSTER PARENTS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 119 of the General Laws is hereby
2 amended by inserting after Section 23 the following section:—
3 Section 23C. Prior to the placement of any child in a foster
4 home, each foster parent, care giver and any household member
5 18 years of age or over shall sign a statement as to whether or not
6 such person has a criminal record in any other jurisdiction or
7 country. The department shall utilize such statement in connection
8 with CORI screening and any other information obtained by the
9 department. Said statement shall be signed under the pains and
10 penalties of perjury and shall be subject to the provisions of
11 Section 1 of Chapter 268.

1 SECTION 2. The Department of Social Services is hereby
2 directed to evaluate and implement a computerized system,
3 through interstate compacts or agreements or criminal justice
4 record linkages, that would provide criminal record background
5 checks and screenings on prospective and current foster parents.

6 DSS shall include in the application process for licensure as a
7 foster home, a question seeking the number of years the applicants
8 and all household members over 18 have been residing in the
9 Commonwealth, and if applicable, the location and duration of
10 any residence the persons had prior to residing in the Common-
11 wealth. The prospective parents and other household members
12 over 18 shall be informed of the procedures contained in this
13 section.

14 Such information shall be utilized in conjunction with CORI
15 checks and other background screenings and evaluations con-
16 ducted by the department, during the licensing process for
17 approving foster homes and determining suitability for the place-
18 ment of foster children.